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Senate

The Senate met at 1 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our help and shelter, we look to You for defense. Defend us from temptation. Help us to say no to tempting voices and the things that lead to ruin as You teach us to follow Your blueprint for abundant living. Defend us from arrogance as You help us to esteem others as significant because we can see Your image in them. Defend us from ingratitude in the day of prosperity.

Today, defend our lawmakers from discouragement so that they will persevere in well-doing, with the knowledge that the harvest, though delayed, is not denied. Help them to remember that no time exists when You will fail them, and no moment comes when You will forsake them.

Lord, defend each of us from a stubbornness that refuses to be guided by Your light and sustained by Your grace.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a pe-

riod for the transaction of morning business until 3 p.m., with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today the Senate will conduct a period of morning business until 3 p.m., with the first hour under the control of the majority and the second under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Interior appropriations bill. Under a previous agreement, all amendments to the bill must be offered during today's session. The majority leader announced on Friday that there will be no rollcall votes today, but Senators who have amendments to the bill should make themselves available to offer and debate their amendments.

I also remind my colleagues that the next vote will occur tomorrow morning, shortly before 10 a.m. That vote will be on the passage of H.R. 6, the Energy bill. Following disposition of the Energy bill, the Senate will resume consideration of the Interior appropriations bill, and we will vote on previously offered amendments to the Interior appropriations bill tomorrow.

In addition to the vote on passage of the Energy bill and completing work on the Interior appropriations bill, the Senate will act on any additional appropriations measures, including the Homeland Security appropriations bill and other legislative or executive items. This is the last week of the session before the July 4 recess and Senators should expect a busy week with votes throughout.

GUANTANAMO BAY

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I rise to speak about our operation at Guantanamo Bay, in Cuba. There is so much information out there that is untrue, it must be corrected. Yesterday, I went to Guantanamo Bay with my colleagues, Senator CRAPO and Senator ISAKSON. We went to see for ourselves what all the so-called fuss is about down there, and we want to help set the record straight.

While we were there we also saw Senator WYDEN and Senator BEN NELSON. I am sure they will tell you what they saw when they come to speak on the Senate floor.

Our soldiers assigned in Cuba are on an island within an island. The base is isolated from the rest of Cuba, and it is isolated from the rest of our military. Our troops do not just drive off post to go watch a movie or to go to the mall. All they have is on post, from shopping to entertainment to food.

Many serving at Guantanamo leave their families behind. Some are National Guard troops, far away from home. It is a tough life, and they have a job that is mentally and physically challenging.

As we toured the detention camps, our troops patrolled the buildings and open areas in full uniform. In the afternoon, the temperatures reached into the high 80s, and the humidity could not have gotten much worse. But those brave young men and women stood guard over the detainees to keep them in line and protect them from other detainees.

Probably the weather and the Sun are the last things our troops are worried about. The people they are guarding are the terrorists. They are the worst of the worst. They are all dangerous. Many directly fought Americans on the battlefield, killing and wounding our soldiers, yet our young men and women watch over these terrorists and provide for them. They do this despite the terrorists having taken

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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up arms against fellow American servicemembers. The danger the terrorists pose to our military in Guantanamo is real and enduring.

While we were inspecting one of the detention facilities, the halls were filled with sounds of detainees beating on metal doors of their cells and yelling at anyone who could hear. Weapons have been found in the detainees' cells and are often made from ordinary items they are provided.

Our troops on the ground in Guantanamo are putting their lives on the line to protect and provide for terrorists. Yet some of my colleagues and others, commentators, suggest that these brave young men and women are the criminals, and when they make such outrageous statements, there are many in the media willing to repeat the accusation without bothering to check the facts for themselves.

For example, almost any picture seen of detainees at Guantanamo is from Camp X-Ray. Everyone is familiar with those pictures. They are the ones with men in orange suits, living in open-air cells made of chain-link fences.

I went to Camp X-Ray. Do you know what I saw? I saw weeds several feet high and plants growing all over the fencing. Do you know what I did not see? People. Camp X-Ray has been closed since 2002. It is no longer used at all. But those images are the ones that continue to appear in print and on the news. It is no secret that Camp X-Ray is closed, but pictures of the new and improved facilities are never shown.

I wish to talk about these new facilities. They have come a long way from concrete slabs surrounded by chain-link fencing. I cannot say I felt bad for any terrorist who had to spend the night in Camp X-Ray, but the new camps are significantly better. They offer the terrorists more privacy, space, and protection from the weather. They offer the terrorists areas for recreation. Some even have air-conditioning and semiprivate showers.

The newest facility is modeled after the state-of-the-art prisons in the United States and is fully air-conditioned. New furniture is on the way, and an even newer facility is about to be built. But I have not seen any of those camps I just described on the news, and I am hopeful that those in the media will help clear up this issue.

But the real issue that goes to the heart of this debate is, Are we serious about fighting terrorism or not? If we are, then these new detention facilities at Guantanamo will remain open until no more terrorists are plotting to harm innocent Americans. What goes on there is critical to our fight against terrorism and the war on terrorism. First and simplest, if the terrorists are locked up in Cuba, then they cannot kill Americans in Iraq or New York, in Afghanistan or even in Kentucky. Those being held at Guantanamo are the worst of the worst terrorists we have captured. The military has decided that they are so dangerous that

they must be moved halfway around the world to keep them away from the battlefield. That is reason enough to keep Guantanamo open.

There are bomb makers who are no longer making bombs because they are in Cuba. Terrorist training camp instructors are no longer teaching classes because they are being held next to a Caribbean beach. Others at Guantanamo were caught with heavy weapons, explosives, or anti-aircraft missiles, but they will not get to use those weapons to kill Americans because we are holding them in the detention facilities. One person being held there very well may be the intended 20th hijacker for September 11, but because he is locked in a cell in Cuba, he will not be able to fly a plane into a building anytime soon.

I could describe many individuals held at Guantanamo and give reasons they need to remain in our custody, but I only will mention a few more—12, to be exact. That is the number of those we know who have been released from Guantanamo and returned to fight against the coalition troops. Some have been killed and some have been recaptured. But we must not miss the lesson that we are dealing with dangerous people who will stop at nothing to kill innocent Americans.

But there is more to Guantanamo than locking up terrorists. As important as keeping the terrorists from carrying out their evil plans, we are gaining valuable information from the detainees. Those terrorists are one of our greatest sources of information into terrorist operations, financing, and personnel. Some of them were very close to Osama bin Laden at one time. Others were active in planning terrorist attacks. Still others worked on finance and personnel recruitment for terrorist groups. Think of the wealth of information they have.

The detainees can identify people involved in terrorist groups. They have helped us better understand the structure of terrorist organizations. They know locations and transportation routes. They can validate information gathered on the battlefield. To this day, they continue to provide us with critical information in our fight against terrorism.

We are not gathering information from them in any inhuman way. I saw several interrogations. None of the terrorists were being beaten. There was no torture, and they were not being starved. Throughout the entire detention camp, terrorists were given clothes and bedding. They are given Muslim prayer rugs and Korans. There are arrows everywhere pointing to Mecca. We even witnessed a prayer call announcing to the terrorists that it was time for them to turn to Mecca and pray.

That, Mr. President, is a far cry from the repressive regimes to which critics of Guantanamo have compared our military. Did the Nazis respect the Jewish faith? Did Stalin and Pol Pot

practice religious tolerance? Absolutely not.

The detainees are being fed well. In fact, their meals often cost more than the meals served to our troops because of their cultural dietary restrictions. When Hitler imprisoned Jews, he did not go to lengths to prepare them kosher meals that followed their faith.

The military has constructed a hospital for the detainees. While we were there, we saw a detainee being transported to the hospital for an examination. When needed, the terrorists have access to other doctors and medical facilities. If a specialist is needed, then one is brought in. In other words, we give the terrorists the same medical care our troops get.

Many get dental care and glasses for the first time in their lives. Others have been diagnosed with diseases and other medical issues and have received treatment. We have even given amputees new medical limbs.

Again, I ask my colleagues, did Hitler and Pol Pot provide dental care to their prisoners before they killed them?

And the terrorists are not being held without a review process. Each person brought to Guantanamo is reviewed to make sure they really are an enemy combatant. They are also periodically reviewed to make sure they still need to be held at Guantanamo or if they should be moved elsewhere or even released.

The detainees are given a chance to explain their side of the story. International law does not require these combatants be given a review board. Our military is going out of its way to give these terrorists rights above and beyond the evil regimes the war's critics have cited. After all, there were not review boards in the gulags or the concentration camps. The Nazis did not care if their prisoners had taken up arms against Germany. They locked them up into slavery anyway.

Anyone who compares our operations at Guantanamo to those ruthless killers is lying to the public and insulting our troops. No detainees at Guantanamo have died due to their treatment by our troops—none, zero.

Hitler murdered 6 million Jews and caused the death of tens of millions more on the battlefield. Stalin had tens of millions killed. Pol Pot was responsible for the death of about 1 million in his "killing fields."

Of course, the detainees are not living in luxury. But these are dangerous killers we are talking about. They are terrorists. But we treat them with respect, which is much more than they have ever treated us with.

Conditions improve every day at Guantanamo. But as long as they are dangerous to America, we must continue to hold them and gather information. We have a determined enemy that wants to do nothing but harm us. The only way to beat them is to stand strong, fight longer, and not back down.

What we are doing at Guantanamo is a key part of our fight. These terrorists cannot hurt us as long as they are locked up. They will continue to provide us with valuable intelligence, and we continue to treat them with the dignity they refuse to show us.

Finally, Mr. President, I want to say thank you to all the brave men and women working for our freedom at Guantanamo and throughout the world. I am always impressed with the fine young Americans in our military. And seeing them yesterday was no exception. I had the privilege of meeting a few soldiers from Kentucky while at Guantanamo Bay. I cannot say their names due to the security reasons we have and to ensure their future safety. They, and others, are serving our country with honor. I thank them and their families for their sacrifices.

Mr. President, it was an unbelievable experience yesterday in Cuba at Guantanamo Bay, one I will remember for the rest of my life.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAPO. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I stand and join my colleague, Senator BUNNING from Kentucky. I was one of those who was able to be on this trip to Guantanamo yesterday. Along with Senator ISAKSON from Georgia, we were joined there by two other Senators, Senator WYDEN from Oregon and also Senator NELSON from Nebraska, who came in on a separate trip.

We had an opportunity to view exactly what is happening at Guantanamo. As I said, I am glad to be able to stand with my colleague, Senator BUNNING, and set the record straight about what the United States and the honorable men and women of our armed services are doing to serve the United States, the people of this country, and, frankly, the people of the world as we fight to defeat terrorism.

I want to first thank my colleague, Senator BUNNING, who has given a very thorough and helpful review. I will try not to repeat too many of the things he went through, but he has identified the core points that need to be made as we discuss what is truly happening at Guantanamo.

I want to start out by going into a little bit of detail about who exactly is there. Secondly, I want to talk a little bit about the legal framework because, frankly, a lot of the debate we hear throughout the country and throughout the world today has to do with different points of view about the legal framework within which we are dealing with the circumstances at Guantanamo.

Then I want to talk about the question of transparency; in other words, do we really know what is happening there? I know there are a lot of people who will say: You went there and you visited, but did you really see the truth? I want to talk about that. I also

want to talk about what we saw—how are the detainees being treated.

Finally, I want to talk about our own troops. What is their morale? And what is their conduct? And then, actually, the last thing I want to talk about is: Of what benefit to the United States and the world is Guantanamo?

I am going to go back now and talk, first of all, about who is there. I think there has been a bit of a misconception about who it is we are detaining at Guantanamo.

Since the effort began in defeating the Taliban in Afghanistan—and it has expanded to the war in Iraq—the United States has captured more than 70,000 detainees—70,000—in the conduct of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Among that number, the vast majority have been handled in other ways. Either they have been released or they have been turned over to other authorities, other nations, or they are being held in facilities in the area of the battle. But we are working with Iraq, Afghanistan, and other governments to make sure they take control of detainees to the maximum extent possible.

But there are some detainees who are so dangerous that we have made the decision we must maintain control over them. They are also controlled because they have information that is critical to us in the battle against terrorism. And after a very thorough vetting process, out of 70,000 who have been captured in these battles and in other efforts to fight against terrorism, approximately 800 have been moved to Guantanamo.

My numbers are going to be kind of rounded here, but of that 800, about 235 have already been released or moved into the custody of other countries. My colleague, Senator BUNNING, indicated that is not always good news. At least 12 of those who have been released have been found again in the battlefield—some of them killed in battle, others captured again, and at least one was found to have ordered some very significant terrorist activities after being released from Guantanamo.

But about 235 of the 800 who we determined were so dangerous they needed to be moved to Guantanamo have been released or put into the custody of other countries. Approximately 520 remain at Guantanamo. Who are these 520? These are terrorist trainers. These are bomb makers. These are recruiters and facilitators for al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. These are terrorist financiers. These are bodyguards of Osama bin Laden. And these are would-be suicide bombers—to name just a few of those who we have identified and the activities we are stopping by keeping them detained.

I am going to come back a little bit later and talk about what we learn from these detainees. But I would like to talk, next, a little bit about some of the details of individuals whom we have identified. An elaborate process has been put into place, as I indicated, to identify whom we will return and

take to Guantanamo to assess the threat they pose to the United States and the international community, and then to give regular review to this process to be sure they are still the threat that they were and deserve to be kept at the Guantanamo base.

But as a result of this effort, we have collected the most dangerous, and the ones with the most information who can give us the most assistance, through the interrogation process, to help us pursue the war against terrorism.

These detainees include terrorists who are linked to a major al-Qaida attack, including attacks in east Africa, the U.S. Embassy bombings, and the USS Cole attack; terrorists who taught or received training teams on arms, explosives, surveillance, and interrogation resistance at al-Qaida camps in Afghanistan and elsewhere; terrorists who continue to express their commitment to kill Americans, if released; terrorists who have sworn personal allegiance to Osama bin Laden; terrorists who have been linked to several al-Qaida operational plans, including possible targeting of facilities in the United States; members of al-Qaida's international terrorism support network including the financiers, the couriers, the recruiters, and the operatives and those who participated in attempted hijacking instances.

Let me give a couple specific examples. One al-Qaida explosives trainer is there who has provided information to the United States on the September 2001 assassination of Massoud and on the al-Qaida organization's use of mines; another individual who completed advanced terrorist training at camps in Afghanistan and participated in an attempted hijacking and escaped while in custody that resulted in the deaths of Pakistani guards; another individual who was involved in terrorist financing who provided information on Osama bin Laden's front companies, accounts, and international money movements for financing terror. The list goes on and on. This is who is there at Guantanamo. These are the people whom we seek to detain and about whom the debate in this country revolves. They are dangerous, and they must be kept under control or they will kill more Americans and threaten people throughout the world.

What is the legal framework within which they are being detained? That is the crux, though it is not often stated that way, of the debate. I will get into this in more detail, but Senator BUNNING has already indicated, the treatment that is being provided to the detainees is probably the most humane, high quality treatment any nation that has ever captured detainees at war has ever provided to its prisoners. I suspect no other nation today or throughout history could claim to be treating its detainees better. But still the question arises, how and under what legal framework should they be handled? There is an irony here. These

detainees do not serve in a normal army. They do not wear uniforms. They do not serve a nation that is a signer to the Geneva Conventions. They do not honor Geneva Conventions, meaning they do not refrain from attacking civilians and conducting terrorist activities. And because they do not qualify in these categories, they don't qualify under the Geneva Conventions as prisoners of war.

Here is the irony. If they were prisoners of war, they wouldn't be entitled to the legal benefits about which we are now wrangling. They would be entitled to humane treatment, but they would not be entitled to get into the court system of the country that has captured them.

Many throughout this Nation and throughout the world are saying we should provide all of the legal benefits in a criminal law system, such as the criminal justice system in the United States, to these detainees. The United States has declined to do so, stating that these are enemy combatants under the Geneva Conventions. But they are not prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions. And there is the irony. If we could classify them as prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions, we could avoid the debate about what their rights are and how they should be treated. Instead, since they are not a group entitled to participate in the United States criminal justice system and are not a group entitled to be considered prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions, but are instead enemy combatants under the Geneva Conventions in a category for which nations have not yet agreed on how they should be treated, the United States is embroiled in a debate as to how to treat them.

How have we resolved this decision? On January 19, 2002, the Secretary of Defense gave specific guidance that all detainees are to be treated humanely. On January 21, the same year, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued executive orders to commanders that transmitted the Secretary of Defense order that these detainees be treated humanely. On February 7, 2002, President Bush determined that al-Qaida and Taliban detainees should be treated humanely, consistent with the principles of the Geneva Conventions and consistent with military necessity. The detention of enemy combatants in wartime is not an act of punishment. It is a matter of security and military necessity. It prevents enemy combatants from continuing to fight against the United States or its partners in the war on terror. Releasing enemy combatants before the end of hostilities and allowing them to rejoin the fight would only prolong the conflict and endanger our coalition and American forces.

Here is the point of the debate. The United States, though these enemy combatants are in an uncertain category, has provided to them all of the humane treatment required by the Ge-

neva Convention and more legal rights than they would have if they were prisoners of war. Yet the United States continues to be criticized because there are those—and this is what everyone needs to understand—who will not be satisfied until we choose not to treat these enemy combatants in the context of a war but instead choose to treat them as criminals in a criminal justice system and thereby change the legal framework under which they are being handled. The United States correctly and properly refuses to do so. If we were to do so, we would not be able to defend the interests of the country against enemies who are conducting war against us as effectively as we can if we are able to treat them under the Geneva Conventions as enemy combatants. And when you hear the debate about how they are being treated, listen carefully, because most of the debate is not about their physical condition or whether they are being treated humanely. It is about how they are being categorized with regard to these legal battles that those who are engaged in the issue wish to see ensue.

Let's talk about what we saw, and then I will describe how they are actually physically being treated and whether what we saw is true. I have already had those who knew that I went there ask me whether the opportunity we had is one which truly showed us what was happening at Guantanamo. To me this is an issue of transparency. What is happening there, and were we shown what was truly going on?

First, we visited every facility there. Five Senators, with many other individuals with us from other government agencies, went through and visited every facility. My colleague Senator BUNNING indicated that we even went to Camp X-Ray which has not been utilized for 2 or 3 years and which is literally overgrown. I walked into one of the containment facilities there at Camp X-Ray. I had to brush away the weeds in order to move through the door and to go in and see what it looked like. We visited Camps 1, 2, 3, and 4. And they are numbered in terms of the order in which they were built. These are the newer camps that were constructed to provide better facilities for these detainees than were originally there at Camp X-Ray when we first started using the base. We were able to see the medical facilities. We were able to observe literally everything at the base. And I can say that I don't think it would have been possible for them to have hidden from us what was happening.

We were able to observe the interrogations, to interview and discuss with the personnel present what was happening, right down to the troops who were conducting the specific guarding activities inside the cell blocks. If that is not sufficient, the International Committee of the Red Cross has had 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week access to the facility at its discretion. They have had a permanent presence, recently

changing that only at their choosing. The media, both national and international, have had 400 visits to Guantanamo, representing over 1,000 members of the media who have been there to also observe. Lawyers for the detainees, who would not even be allowed if we categorized them as prisoners of war, have come and, in many of the habeas corpus cases, to observe and discuss with the detainees. And somewhere in the neighborhood of 15 to 20 Senators and 75 to 100 Representatives, in addition to over 100 congressional staff, have been there to observe.

My point is that in terms of transparency, is the United States letting its own people, its Congress, and the world know what is being done there? I believe the answer is clearly yes.

My colleague Senator BUNNING went through the numbers of deaths in the Nazi concentration camps, in the gulags under Stalin, and the numbers, you will recall, were in the millions. Not one detainee has died at Guantanamo. On the contrary, they have the best medical care that I believe any detainees in history have ever had. So as far as the question goes with regard to whether we are providing a true and accurate picture to the public about what is happening there, the answer is unequivocally yes.

What is happening there? I would like to talk a little bit about what we saw. As I indicated, there are a number of facilities. They are called Camp 1, 2, 3, and 4. They are building Camp 5 and Camp 6. They are different in terms of the levels of security and in terms of the operations. Those who are detained there are able to be in one of the camps versus the other camps depending on how they respond to their detention. If they are the more violent kind who do not follow instructions, then they are often in individual confinement. This individual confinement does not mean solitary confinement. It means they would be in a cell block with 40 or 50 others, and you can see each other through the cell. These are not enclosed. So they have the ability to play chess between cells and so forth. They have running water, sinks, and toilets in each cell.

They have religious paraphernalia so they can practice their religion. They are facilitated in the practice of that religion by being provided with prayer calls and with directions. From wherever in the camp you are, you can see an arrow that points toward Mecca so you know the directions. They are provided recreational opportunities, showers, and three, good, solid meals a day, as well as outstanding medical care. Those are the ones who are in the most closely confined circumstances. Those who are more willing to follow instructions and less willing to attack their guards are allowed to live in more communal circumstances where the rooms, instead of being individual cell units, are in units where ten or more can live together, and then those groups can go out in recreational facilities and have

a little bit expanded recreational opportunity and the like.

Then there is the maximum security facilities which would be comparable to the kinds of similar facilities that are there that you could find anywhere in the United States, in prison facilities that are subject to extensive litigation and oversight by attorneys and our own judicial system. Throughout this entire process, whether one is in the most extreme, highest maximum security circumstance or whether one is in some of those areas where the more responsible detainees are able to be, they are always provided with the best possible treatment. I don't believe it would be possible for a valid argument of some type of physical abuse to be made because there is such care there to be certain that even when the detainees are being interrogated—and, by the way, the interrogation is a very humane and, frankly, easygoing process which does not create physical threat to the detainees—there are always more than one or two or three people observing what is happening so there cannot be a circumstance where something goes awry and someone abuses the relationship and the situation.

Let me talk a little bit about the medical care. I said they are getting top-notch medical care. I asked many of those who we were there with what the comparability would be between the medical care provided to these detainees and that provided to detainees by other nations in other wars or in other circumstances. Consistently no one could give me an example of better medical care ever being provided anywhere. I asked if it was equivalent to the kind of medical care that our own troops were being provided. The answer was yes. It is probably better medical care than these detainees have ever had in their lifetime. When they were first brought there, many of them had traumatic injuries from the battles in which they were captured. Those injuries were treated. Now they have reached a point that they have been there several years, some of them, where they are being treated for the kinds of problems you and I and others would want to have medical care for. They are getting annual checkups. They are being treated for diabetes, if they have back ailments or heart problems, whatever it may be, if they have dietary needs, they are being treated for them.

A number of them have lost their limbs, not because they lost them in battle but because they lost them while they were building bombs to blow up Americans. And we have provided treatment for their loss of limbs and actually provided them with prosthetics and helped them with the physical therapy so they can regain the use of their bodies to the maximum extent we can help them. We have facilities there to do major surgery. We have all kinds of other support. If they have medical needs that go beyond what we

have there available, they are taken elsewhere to get that medical treatment.

In fact, I would like to move now to the discussion of what the morale of our troops is. I think as we met there with people at all levels, from the guards to those who ran the hospitals to the managers to everyone else, I could honestly say the morale of our troops there is very high. But there is a concern that was consistently expressed to me by them. I had the opportunity to have lunch with some of those who were literally on the front lines having to go into the cell blocks and to provide the guard service around the clock with these detainees.

And they are concerned about what the American people and the international public think about them and about what they are doing because they believe they are treating these detainees with the highest respect and with the most humane treatment possible. They are overseeing it rigorously. If any of them steps out of line, they get handled and they get in trouble. Yet they are subjected constantly to threats and harassment and abuse from the detainees.

It is my perspective that if anyone is being abused at Guantanamo, it is not the detainees, it is the good young men and women guards who are there on the front line, who are themselves physically threatened, verbally threatened, and in other ways abused. It has been reported what kinds of things are thrown at them through the cell blocks as they walk through. When they happen to go through and a detainee throws urine or feces on them, they have to go out, be hosed off, and go back into duty. If anyone is being abused at Guantanamo, it is the treatment that is being afforded to our men and women of the military that is causing the abuse to them, rather than the reverse.

For those here in this body or anywhere else to accuse our men and women of mistreating those at Guantanamo is a great irony because any abuse or mistreatment that is happening is the reverse.

I am proud of our men and women there. They are truly doing a great service for this country and for this world. Let me conclude by talking a little bit about what that is.

By the way, I forgot one piece of information. I have talked about the medical facilities and other kinds of support that have been provided to these detainees to make sure they are being properly cared for. In the newest facilities, the prisoners even get air conditioning, which is not something most of the troops get, at least during their working hours. But what does that cost us? What kind of investment has the United States made? To this point, the United States has spent over \$241 million in providing these medical facilities, these containment and detention facilities, and for the care and treatment and feeding of these detain-

ees. The annual cost will go on probably at \$100 million a year, until we are able to resolve this conflict. The United States has also spent over \$140 million in existing or new detention facilities in Afghanistan and Iraq. So we are putting a tremendous amount in here.

What benefit does it provide to us? As I indicated, the purpose of this detention, to me, is twofold. First of all, it is to stop dangerous terrorists from being put back into the field so they can go back out and continue to kill Americans and others and train and facilitate other terrorists in doing the same thing. The first thing is to stop them from committing terrorist activity. The second purpose is to be able to gain from them information that will help us better pursue or fight against terrorists around the world. The question of Guantanamo detainees, which I will again state is not the kind of interrogation that one thinks of when they think of a gulag, or what you might see on TV as a threatening interrogation. This is entirely nonthreatening interrogation. It has improved the security of our Nation and coalition partners by helping us to expand our understanding of the operations of the terrorists. It has given us an expanded understanding of the organizational structure of al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. It has given us more knowledge of the extent of the terrorist presence in Europe, the United States, and the Middle East. It has given us knowledge of al-Qaida's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, of methods of recruitment and location of recruitment centers, terrorist skill sets, general and specialized operative training, and of how legitimate financial activities are being used to hide terrorist operations.

The intelligence we are gaining by the interrogations of those who are kept at Guantanamo has prevented terrorist attacks and has saved American lives. Not only has no one died at Guantanamo, not only has the highest health care possible been provided to them, but lives have been saved as a result of our activities there. Detainees have revealed al-Qaida leadership structures and operating funding mechanisms, training and selection programs, travel patterns, support infrastructure, and plans for attacking the United States and other countries. Information has been used by our forces on the battlefield to identify significant military and tribal leaders who are engaged in or supporting attacks on coalition forces. Detainees have continuously provided information that confirms other reporting regarding the roles and intentions of al-Qaida and other terrorist operatives.

I could get into details, but I will not do that publicly. The fact is, we are getting extensive, detailed information from the terrorists who are kept at Guantanamo, which is saving American lives and helping us to protect our young men and women in the military and people in other nations.

I want to conclude my remarks by coming back to the beginning. There has been a lot of debate about what is going on at Guantanamo. What is the United States doing? Why is it doing it? Is the United States creating some type of a new detention circumstance in modern warfare, which parallels some of the most terrible examples that our critics have been able to throw up at us? I went down there wanting to know and wanting to see and to be able to report back to the American people about what truly is happening.

What I found was that the U.S. men and women of our Armed Forces are committed, honorable, loyal, duty-bound members of the American military who are following the orders of their Commander in Chief to the letter, following the Geneva Conventions, and providing beyond what the Geneva Conventions even requires in terms of protection to these detainees, in a service to America and to the world. I found a circumstance where I don't believe a valid argument can be made that there is any nonhumane treatment of these detainees. I found a circumstance in which it appears to me that what is being portrayed by some is simply manufactured out of whole cloth in order to perpetuate a broader debate against the United States and our interests.

I also became convinced that, far beyond being simply a detention facility, Guantanamo is one of the key strategic interrogation facilities necessary for the United States in pursuit of the war against terror in this world. As we have said in both of our remarks, Guantanamo is where the worst of the worst are taken. They are taken there to be protected so that we can be protected from them and so that we can gain information from them that will help us better protect ourselves as we continue to fight to defend against the likes of Osama bin Laden.

I also stand here to commend the young men and women of our fighting forces—not just those who at Guantanamo are suffering the abuse of the detainees and the extremes of the weather and the living circumstances there to defend us, but those who serve throughout this world, whether it be in Iraq or Afghanistan or any of the other points of conflict or in any other of the stations around this world, where we have men and women deployed to defend our interests.

The United States is at war against terrorists and we must acknowledge that. The efforts of the men and women in our military should be commended, not discredited. I stand as one Senator to thank the men and women of our Armed Forces for the tremendous job they do. They put their lives on the line daily for us and they should be given our thanks, not our criticism.

With that, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. BUNNING. I thank my colleague from Idaho for his great observation of our trip yesterday. I also know that Senator ISAKSON was unable to be here, but he will make a statement later this evening. I hope Senator BEN NELSON and Senator RON WYDEN will also come forward and report what they saw at Guantanamo.

I am happy to also thank, as Senator CRAPO has, all of our men and women in the military who serve our great country.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SOCIAL SECURITY PRIVATIZATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, soon after President Bush won reelection last November, he made it clear that the top priority of his second term would be the privatization of Social Security. This is something the President had thought of long before his second term. In fact, when he ran for Congress in the late seventies from Texas, he talked then about the Social Security plan going broke and that it should be privatized. So this is something he has thought of a long time. But since he was elected the second time, he and other members of his administration have organized a massive campaign, given countless speeches, and crisscrossed the country all in an effort to sell the American people privatization.

It has been a tough sell, though. The polls show that people have accepted this whole Social Security agenda about 25 percent. When he started it was in the 70s. Now it is down to 25 percent. It has been a tough sell because the President's privatization proposal is flawed in many ways. It would require deep benefit cuts, even for workers who don't choose to privatize accounts. It would require massive borrowing from countries such as China, Saudi Arabia, where we borrow about 40 percent of the money we borrow for this year's deficit, which will be in the hundreds of billions of dollars, probably closer to half a trillion than not. It would turn Social Security from a guarantee into a gamble. And his privatized accounts would not strengthen Social Security's finances at all. In fact, it would make the long-term challenge worse, not better. The President has said the privatization plan will not stabilize Social Security.

It is important to remember that even if we do nothing, which no one here is advocating, Social Security will pay 100 percent of promised benefits until about 2055 and about 80 percent thereafter. In fact, President Bush will

be about 108 years old at the time Social Security would start paying 80 percent of benefits.

While claims of a crisis are obviously false, it is also true that we face a long-term challenge, and we as Democrats need to address that, as we have said we would.

Unfortunately, the President has other ideas. His goal is not to bolster Social Security. To the contrary, he went all the way to West Virginia, arguing that the trust fund is nothing more than an accounting fiction. And you can't argue for strengthening something if you don't believe it exists.

No, the President's goal isn't to strengthen Social Security. His goal is to privatize it. Privatization, with its deep benefit cuts and massive debt, would undermine Social Security, and as a matter of principle we Democrats will never go along.

Social Security is based on the best of American values. It promises Americans if they work hard, contribute, and play by the rules, they can retire and live in dignity, and their families will be protected if they become disabled or pass away. A third of the benefits paid out by Social Security are not, as my grandmother referred to it, old-age pensions. They are for people who are disabled, widows, orphans. Social Security is not a handout. It promises benefits that people earn through their hard work. That is as it should be, and we need to do everything we can to make good on that promise.

Fortunately, the American people agree with us. Along with several of my Democratic colleagues, I have traveled the country on behalf of Social Security and against privatization. Everywhere we go, whether rural areas, suburban settings, or big cities, the response is the same: Americans don't want Social Security privatized. Middle class workers don't want their benefits cut. They don't want our Nation to get even further in debt to the Chinese and Japanese and Saudis. They don't want to adopt a risky scheme that could undermine the retirement security they have worked so hard to earn.

According to one poll, as I have mentioned, only 25 percent of Americans support the President's handling of Social Security. The opposition to privatization is as broad as it is deep. From those numbers, it is very obvious that it is not only Democrats throughout the country who oppose this, Republicans oppose it, also. Most Americans in rural areas who are especially reliant on Social Security voted for President Bush last year, but they strongly oppose his privatization plan. In fact, among those rural residents who know a great deal about the President's plan, opponents outnumber supporters by almost 40 percent.

That certainly seems to be the prevailing view among my neighbors at home in Searchlight. Whenever I am home, folks tell me the same thing: